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SPIRITUALISM AND THE LAWS OF NATURE.

Spiritualists are frequently told that the facts they allege are sufficiently disproved by science: they naturally ask "What science?" The enquiry is a modest one, but it rarely meets any response save oracular utterances about "*Laws of Nature*," "*The Order of the Universe*," and like phrases. Now I venerate the man who unfolds the laws of nature in any of its manifold and wondrous departments; to me he stands forth as an interpreter of the mysteries of God: but the arrogant egotism which simply indulges in empirical platitudes about them is not to be respected—is not respectable. These phrases however are always a safe card to play off against Spiritualism, they are a dainty bait, only use it skilfully, "put the worm on the hook tenderly as though you loved it," (as that "quaint old cruel coxcomb" Isaac Walton has it,) there are some good-gods sure to snap at it. But it is grievous to find distinguished and really useful men, ignorantly or heedlessly falling into the fashionable cant and clap-trap, following in the wake of vulgar prejudices, which they thus perpetuate.

To this notion that Spiritual manifestations are contrary to the "Laws of Nature" may be traced much of the prevalent supercilious and off-hand treatment of Spiritualism and indisposition to investigate its claims among our present public instructors. Thus, in Chambers' Journal, No. 110, the writer of an article on "*The Spirit Faith in America*," gives a very interesting and impartial statement of the facts of Spiritualism gathered from a file of the *New England Spiritualist*, admits the "good faith," the "religious earnestness and sincerity" of its witnesses and professors, honestly avows that "We cannot come to such a view of human testimony, as to suppose it possible that thousands of people can wilfully enter on a certain self-consistent system of deception, which they will support for years without any one confessing or denouncing the trick. The multitude who say they hear and see such and such things must be

impressed with a sense of their reality, or they would never pronounce as they do." After making all these admissions, the writer goes on to observe, "If this be a world of *natural law*, as most enlightened persons believe it to be, it is *impossible* that such things can be realities: they must be some form of delusion or fallacy." What the precise form of this "delusion or fallacy" is, the writer does not inform us, further than by remarking "We believe it to be one of a very peculiar and subtle character, arising from a certain mode of operation of the brain, and singularly deceptious in its character and results." This remark is sufficiently mysterious, and may contain a great deal of wisdom, like Lord Burleigh's shake of the head, but it is my misfortune that at present "I don't see it." Perhaps the next writer I am about to quote as he is a great authority on the "mode of operation of the brain," will at some future opportunity deign to enlighten my ignorance.

The author of *The Constitution of Man*, in the Introduction to the recent edition of his work on the relation between Science and Religion, adverts to "the prevalence even among the educated classes, of a belief in Spirit-Rapping and Table-Turning," and thereupon, delivers himself in this wise. "The same class of persons possessed so little knowledge of the *laws of physical nature* and so little reverence for the power and wisdom of Him who established them, that they indulged in the wildest dreams of tables being moved and made to perform wonderful evolutions by mysterious influences, *in contradiction to the order of nature* revealed by previous knowledge and experience." To prevent misunderstanding, he explains the sense in which he uses the term "laws of nature" to be as follows. "Every object and being in nature has received a definite constitution and also powers of acting on other objects and beings. The action of the forces is so regular, that we describe them as operating under laws imposed on them by God; but these words indicate merely our perception of the regularity of the action."

Very well! But do we know "the definite constitution of every object and being, and its powers of acting on other objects and beings"? Do we know all the laws of nature?—have we them catalogued and numbered, ticketed and pigeon-holed, ready to be produced at the shortest notice? Is it quite certain that what is called a violation of natural law, is not in fact the operation of some law not understood—a deeper law in which other laws are included? I may for instance be told that it is contrary to the law of gravitation for a heavy body, say a round table, to rise from the floor without the application of force; but is force absent, because it, or the agent applying it is unseen. If unseen Spirits are present who through the medium of imponderable fluids or otherwise are able to act—that is exert force upon solid bodies, wherein is the violation of natural law? Whether a table does so rise is a question of fact to be determined upon evidence. I, in common with thousands, testify to have been many times an eye-witness of it, and further, that this force has been directed by some intelligent, though invisible operator, as evidenced by responses and communications telegraphed to us by the table as his instrument; the intelligence so conveyed clearly not being our own. This then being a fact, we may be sure that like every other fact, it is subject to the opera-

tion of law, whether that law is perceived by us or not, the lower material law giving place to, or rather being included in, the higher spiritual law.

That the educated and philosophic even of this generation do not understand "the order of nature" in one of its most important departments, — that of the action of the human mind through the brain as its organ, is indeed the burden of Mr. Combe's lamentation in the book before us. Concerning another department of "the Order of Nature" — Electricity, an eminent authority, Mr. Rutter, remarks, "It is probable that we are acquainted with only detached and widely separated parts of its phenomena. The laws which control its combined and ceaseless operations, and by which the greater part of its work is performed, are, perhaps, so remote from our view, and so far beyond the reach of our perceptions, that we may never with certainty know anything of their existence." These considerations should I think make us modest in pronouncing authoritatively upon what is, and what is not in "the order of nature." As the last quoted writer observes, "Those who talk oracularly, about the course of nature, and the laws of nature, and who try to make it appear that everything which cannot be explained by an immediate reference to their own exposition of such laws, is not entitled to belief, have a great deal yet to learn. Such persons ought to become pupils before they set themselves up for teachers."

I think too we greatly err if we suppose that the laws of nature or the forces of nature operate like dead machinery; these laws are various in kind,—mechanical, dynamical, chemical, vital, spiritual; and we find that the lower law is ever subordinated to the higher; thus the physical or chemical laws which when unchecked resolve our bodies into their constituent elements, are suspended and held in check by the vital laws which control the animal economy. We also find that the most potent forces in nature are those farthest removed from the gross forms of matter. Water wears away the hardest stone, the electric fluid rives the solid oak; Man makes the stone, the water, the electric fluid, alike subserve his purposes. Spiritual forces control material ones. If then mind governs matter,—if, as we daily see, man overcomes the forces of gravitation and inertia,—evolves and applies latent material forces in accordance with his volition, it seems to me that spirit-power is amply sufficient to produce far more astonishing phenomena than any of the recent spirit-manifestations, and that these are "in perfect harmony with the laws of nature as revealed by previous knowledge and experience." It is not that the physical laws of nature are denied but that a new factor is introduced into the calculation. Before judgment is given it seems to me not unreasonable to require that the evidence be heard, and that it be shewn either that the cause assigned has no existence, that it does not operate, in the case at issue, or, that it is inadequate to account for the effects produced. The *modus operandi* by which Spirits divested of animal corporeity act upon matter, is another and an open question, upon which discussion would be gladly welcomed; but the fact itself is one to be determined not by any *ipse dixit*, but by admitted rules of evidence. I see no reason why the testimony of living witnesses should be ignored while other testimony, apparently because it is old should be accredited; but if the fact generally is

so, as it seems to be, an appeal in confirmation of the foregoing statement, can be made to facts, which in words at least, the christian world still professes to accept. When for instance, as we read in the New Testament, an angel delivered Peter from prison and from chains, and when an angel rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, was there not in each case a control exercised over material forces by an incorporeal spirit? Nor is the fact in the slightest degree altered, or the argument weakened, by the admission that these things were done by Miracle. For what is a Miracle? A violation of natural laws say you? What then! do you not believe in the regularity of the action of "nature's laws?" Have you "so little reverence for the power and wisdom of him who established them" as to believe in the "wildest dreams of doors and chairs and stones" being moved by "mysterious influences in contradiction to the order of nature?" Do you not see that this is playing fast and loose with the question, that it is an abandonment of the ground of opposition originally held? The best reasoners and theologians take up a ground very different to this and one fully accordant with the views I have here endeavoured to set forth. Thus, the Dean of Westminster, in his Notes on the Miracles, says "That language, however commonly in use, is yet wholly unsatisfactory, which speaks of these wonderful works of God (Christ's Miracles) as *violations of natural law*. *Beyond nature, beyond and above the nature which we know, they are, but not contrary to it.* Nor let it be said that this distinction is an idle one. * * * The true miracle is an higher and purer nature coming down out of the world of untroubled harmonies into this world of ours, which so many discords have jarred and disturbed, and bringing this back again, though it be but for one prophetic moment into harmony with that higher. * * * We should term the miracle not the infraction of a law, but behold in it the lower law neutralised, and for the time put out of working by an higher; and of this abundant analogous examples are evermore going forward before our eyes. Continually we behold in the world around us lower laws held in restraint by higher, mechanic by dynamic, chemical by vital, physical by moral; yet we say not, when the lower thus gives place in favor of the higher, that there was any violation of law, or that anything contrary to nature came to pass: rather we acknowledge the law of a greater freed us swallowing up the law of a lesser. Thus, when I lift my arm, the law of gravitation is not, as far as my arm is concerned, denied or annihilated: it exists as much as ever, but is held in suspense by the higher law of my will. The chemical laws which would bring about decay in animal substances still subsist, even when they are hemmed in and hindered by the salt which keeps those substances from corruption * * * What in each of these cases is wrought may be against one particular law, that law being contemplated in its isolation, and rent away from the complex of laws, whereof it forms only a part. But no law does stand thus alone, and it is not against, but rather in entire harmony with, the system of laws; for the law of those laws is, that where powers come into conflict, the weaker shall give place to the stronger, the lower to the higher. In the miracle, this world of ours is drawn into and within an higher order of things: laws are then at work in the world, which are not the laws of its fallen condition, for

they are laws of mightier range and higher perfection ; and as such they claim to make themselves felt, and to have the pre-eminence and pre-dominance which are rightly their own. * * * The miracle is not a discord in nature, but the coming in of an higher harmony ; not disorder, but instead of the order of earth the order of heaven ; not the violation of law, but that which continually, even in this natural world, is taking place, the comprehension of a lower law in an higher ; in this case the comprehension of a lower natural, in an higher spiritual law ; with only such modifications of the lower as are necessarily consequent upon this."

To these weighty remarks, we will add only a few from the Rev. C. Kingsley, they are none the less valuable for occurring in a popular novel. "Who told you, my dear young friend, that to break the customs of Nature, is to break her laws ? A phenomenon, an appearance, whether it be a miracle or a comet, need not contradict them because it is rare, because it is yet not referable to them. Nature's deepest laws, her only true laws, are her invisible ones. All analyses, whether of appearances, of causes, or of elements, only lead us down to fresh appearances—we cannot see a law, let the power of our lens be ever so immense. The true causes remain just as impalpable, as unfathomable as ever, eluding equally our microscope and our induction — ever tending towards some great primal law, manifesting itself according to circumstances in countless diverse and unexpected forms—till all that the philosopher as well as the divine can say, is — The Spirit of Life, impalpable, transcendental, direct from God, is the only real cause. It "bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth." What if miracles should be the orderly results of some such deep, most orderly, and yet most spiritual law ? * * * * * The difficulty lies only in the rationalists shallow and sensuous view of Nature, and in his ambiguous, slip-slop trick of using the word natural to mean, in one sentence, 'material' and in the next, as I use it, only 'normal and' orderly.' "

The space occupied by these quotations, precludes my pointing out as I could wish, their application to present-occurring spiritual phenomena ; not merely those alluded to by Combe and Chambers, but the entire range which they present. This omission I hope my readers will be able to supply either from their own experience, or by investigation, reading and reflection upon the subject.

T. S.

SPIRIT POWER ON MEDIUMS. No. 2.

SEEINGS—HEARINGS—TEACHINGS.

Said I not in October last,—“This month has been rich in Spirit Teachings,” and as many of our outside friends are very fond of the Devil, and give him credit as the Omniscient and Omnipotent ruler of this beautiful world, and the producer of all things they cannot comprehend ; I feel inclined to refer them to

that Bible saying "By their fruits shall ye know them," and if the holy precepts, the urgent entreaties, the purity of life ever pressed upon us by our Spirit Visitants, are the works and words of Devils, I would say as our Lord and Master said in Judea when his Miracles were by the Orthodox of those days called "Beelzebub." A house divided against itself cannot stand, purity advocated and insisted upon by the genius of impurity, is too glaring a monstrosity to stand the test of Thought.

ON FRIDAY the 27th of September last, I called upon a Lady who is a rapping medium residing some six miles from my house; and whom I had not seen for some time: In passing, I may say the Lady was developed about three years ago to her own amazement,—does not know what to think about it: in her presence articles are conveyed about the room by invisible means, rappings, conversations by the Alphabet, are continually taking place; and in her natural state sees issuing from various persons lights of different colours, and she can by these lights judge of the Mental and Moral character of those she comes in contact with:—Having made these observations, so that the reader may clearly understand the following incidents; I proceed—

On sitting at the table opposite to each other, the medium saw strings of light issuing from my fingers, and bands of light circling my head—said the medium "How curious, I see a band up and down with purple lines on each side, and red letters one under the other; they are getting distinct—the letters are h t a e d how curious—I cannot make anything of it." I suggested that the letters be read backwards; we did so, and it read "Death"—the Medium then saw other letters, e f i l w e n a s i—On reading this also backwards it made "is a new life"—Surprised, I said will you tell me anything about it—Rappings then came on the table, and the letters were h c r a e s pursuing the old method, we found it "Search." Where shall I search? "Try the fourth book." The fourth book—What book? I thought of several books having volumes, and named them; "No" was the answer, at last it was rappe l out. "*In five days your knowledge will be greater.*" Come here was news! something definite. "Death is a new life, try the fourth book—In five days yours knowledge will be greater." The medium then saw a COLUMN of bright light by my side on which was the word—"Strength,"—and attached to it bands of light from me to the Column, having on them the word "Truth" — Various words then appeared in various positions. Suddenly the Medium felt a cold icy chill and saw a dark leaden coloured shadow approach me, I at the same instant felt a creeping feeling as if I had taken cold, and my hands and body were moved into an attitude, as if flying in fear: though of myself I felt no fear. I ordered the evil influence to leave, it did so. I then asked the rapping spirit—Did you see the evil spirit? by rapping the answer given was "*I am from evil free.*" The Medium then saw a bright shadowy form like a child, saw words appear—"I bring you the last kiss." Who? "*tep*" (pet.) I then knew my lately deceased child was present, as the words conveyed a fullness of meaning unknown to any living being but myself; I asked several questions and then said,—my affection for you is strong: these words then appeared "What is affection?" On the spur of the moment I answered

"The love of the Heart;" my hands were then drawn up, and a motion given to them, as if drawing down a rope, till at last the hands descended and gently rested on my heart. While the pulling action was going on, the Medium saw strong rays of light descending on me and at last *showers of stars* falling on my head and body.

Many communications came during the evening by rapping, but I forbear relating them: On reviewing the scenes of the evening, the word "Search" seemed ever to come up in the mind as I was journeying home. The fourth book—What book can it be?—Well five days will settle it!

The following Sabbath morning Mrs. Jones said "John, you have never heard the Rev. D. T. of Stockwell preach; it is a fine morning, suppose you go, and hear him—I replied, I have no objection; and with some difficulty found the church some 2 miles off; the preacher gave out his text St. John. Chap 10, verse 10, "I am come that they might have life:"—the preacher proved that Christ was Divine. He *came* for a purpose—"I am come," Why? "that ye might have life," then followed illustrations of the bodies of men, birds, and flowers, while possessed of life, defying—controlling the surrounding elements—extract life, and the elements then surround and controul them &c. I was much interested with the sermon—at night in bed I was thinking of the past scenes of the day, and it flashed in my mind Why! St. John's Gospel is the iv. Book of the New Testament and the sermon today was all about the "new life" and the text was from the fourth book—how strange! Then the word "Search" came into the mind, and "Search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life and they are they which testify of me," but after vainly endeavouring to remember what part of the bible it was in—I fell asleep. Next morning, the incidents of the previous day were vividly on my mind, I took up the bible, turned to St. John's Gospel; suddenly I felt the influence in my hand as of old: It passed the finger of my right hand over the page and stopped at a word which I found to be "Search" the verse was "Search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life and they are they which testify of me." (Jesus Christ)SEARCH—it is the Scriptures I am to search. The combination of incidents was so strange, that I determined to commence reading the "Fourth Book," so as to know more of the "New life" and I assure my readers, they will be amply compensated if they carefully read that "iv Book." I found it fuller of references to the "new life" the eternal life, than any other book in the bible or elsewhere I ever read. Now look back, and ask yourself the common sense solution of these two questions—1st. Were they lucky hits? or 2d. Did they show mind? Were the words over my head a lucky hit? Were the rappings a lucky hit? Was my wife's suggestion to hear a strange preacher a lucky hit? Was my finger moved to a text I knew not where to find, and to the very word "Search" a lucky hit? Nay verily, mind was shown—foreknowledge was shown—and if a spirit can foresee, is it any marvel, that the Creator of that Spirit can see our every thought and intended action and so by a way we know not "direct our goings."

I now pass on. During the week, I read the iv Book, and on the following Sabbath evening, was drawn by a suction like feeling to my library, containing sev-

eral hundred volumes ; and my hand placed on Dr Adam Clarke's Commentary on the New Testament in parts, a book I bought some years ago, and have scarcely looked at since ; My fore finger moved and pointed to, and rested on one of the Parts. I pulled it out—the finger then pointed to another, it I also brought out — I was then drawn to the table, and the first part was opened, and it was in St. John (The iv. Book) the finger floated up the page and rested on the word "VOICE" and passed on to — "from heaven saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again ; The people therefore that stood by and heard it, said it thundered, others that an angel spake unto him — Jesus answered and said — "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." Surprised and interested at the remarkable passage, as illustrative of the "I am come that ye might have life" I took the two parts up stairs to my family, and narrated the circumstance ; when finished, the hand went rapidly to the second part, and opened, on a page I found to be St. Luke. 1st. Chapter and the finger rested on the words. "The Son of God"—the whole hand then suddenly became influenced, and a rapid downward movement was made on to the worthy Doctor's Comments, and the whole covered with the palm of my hand, and a kind of rapid circular motion made on the open page over the whole Comment, and the hand and arm were lifted up stretched to their full length, and the finger pointed to the skies. On looking to see what it was all about ! I found it was Dr. Clarke's celebrated exposition of his views of the Son-ship of Christ, an exposition which had placed the brand "Hetrodox" on his forehead, and but for his piety, learning and popularity, would have excommunicated him from the church to which he belonged—I asked am I to take that comment as the true explanation of the divine son-ship of Christ ; the answer was "Yes."

As I am now giving Spirit teachings, I feel justified on so vital a subject brought before me in so extraordinary a manner ; to give the pith of the comment "The divine nature could not be born of the virgin, the human nature was born of her : the divine nature had no beginning, it was God manifested in the flesh ; it was that Word which being in the beginning (from eternity) with God, became manifest in human nature. I reject the eternal son-ship of Christ as anti-scriptural and absurd ; If Christ be the son of God as to his divine nature, he cannot be eternal ; a father denotes precedancy of time : Therefore the conjunction of these two terms, Son and Eternity is absolutely impossible, as they imply essentially different and opposite ideas."

Reader—I lay the facts simply before you, the series of incidents from the one great, grand, and glorious declaration in words of light over my head DEATH IS A NEW LIFE. The Sermon—I (Christ) am come that they might have life—and the Bible pointing to "a voice from heaven, I have glorified it ; and will glorify it again," and the sense in which the word SON is to be taken ; present a simple, primitive and unique example of the guidance of the mind of a human being by the direct influence of the spirit of or from the Lord ; as was the case in the olden times when patriarchs and antediluvians lived. He that hath eyes to see, let him perceive.

NOTE: — 9th March 1858 — This evening in the sick room of a dying wife, at

the solemn hour of midnight have I written the last division of this narrative, and feeling the awful importance of the statment therein contained and its bearing on the heart hope of thousands of our fellow men, and hardly knowing what words to use to describe the way my hand was moved over the "comment" asked, I trust prayerfully, that the spirit who moved my hand in October last would kindly repeat the movement, so that I might catch the exact words to use in depicting it. I waited some two minutes—the influence came by a gentle circular motion in the palm of the hand ; it rapidly increased and the whole movement over Dr. Clarke's Comment then lying before me was repeated, even to sweeping the hand upwards and pointing to the skies — then thanked I God, that though my eyes like Elisha's servant, were so material that I could not see the invisible or the invisibles, yet I felt the divine power acting on me as in times past, guiding me to knowledge, and nerving me to declare thus the fact of being acted upon by unseen intelligences; a declaration which a few years ago, would have consigned me to the fires of Smithfield, and even now consigns me to the sneers of Materialists and the anathemas of RELIGIOUS WRY THINKERS.

PECKHAM.

JOHN JONES.

THE MIRROR, CRYSTAL, AND WATER-VESSEL IN SPIRIT-INTERCOURSE.

II.

I concluded my last chapter with some remarks kindly given to me by my Guardian upon Free Will, and I will begin this chapter by saying that without Free Will nothing can be effected in Spiritualism. For, that which we will not acknowledge does not exist for us, or if we stubbornly refuse to know it in its beauty we are forced to know it in all its ugliness — we get, in other words, a wrong idea of it, which is worse than having no idea at all. Thus it is with many, if not most of the opponents of Spiritualism. Having no knowledge, no practical experience, they take upon themselves a decision in the matter which is necessarily built up upon purely theoretical grounds. But logically they are right. Knowing nothing, acknowledging nothing, they would be really and fundamentally transgressing the bounds of verity—to admit the existence of that which is dead to them. Thus does it seem to me that we must view the inefficacy in these modern days of the magical practices I referred to in my introductory chapter. To neutralise the effects of the evil eye—you must be prepared not to fear it, or if you like to express it so, you must ignore the reality of the effect produced. Your Free Will rising above all phenomena of your existence, can either make you acquainted with the occult principles of nature, or debar you for ever from knowing that such occult principles exist.

Therefore is it that the peculiar mode of Spirit-Intercourse by means of the Mirror, Crystal and Vessel of Water is less appreciated than the more common

modes of writing, rapping and trance mediumship. In addition to this it is quite certain that if we seek not the good, the good will remain hidden from us, and the elementary, wandering, evil and earth-bound spirits ever at hand have no hesitation in taking advantage of the voluntary surrender of Free Will which takes place on the part of those, who, for the sake of experiment, from the desire for information, or in the hope of enlightenment, seat themselves and call by the abstraction of all selfhood from the circle, other intelligences, some better and some worse, into their midst. Streams of magnetism passing from the spirit spheres to earth or rather to matter, carry to our sensations ideas and outward appearances which we must judge by their fruits. If after a time incoherency ensues, the mode of spirit intercourse should be most carefully scrutinized—the state of mind in which the mortal individual finds himself should be examined—the nature of the communication itself tested by all the intellectual powers possessed by the person seeking communion — and above all the motives should not be those of mere curiosity—nor should there be doubt as to the result. In all matters pertaining to spirit, doubt or indifference is destruction and recoils upon the unfortunate operator with a force which for ever deprives him of spiritual perception. It is for this reason that those who laugh Spiritualism to scorn and who examine and scientifically demonstrate it to be an hallucination never move from their position. They have arrived at a result but it is a negative and self-destructive result. They find themselves deprived of that enduring faith which He said would remove mountains. And although they deny for ever afterwards it is a denial which carries in itself an admission, for who would care to deny the existence of anything if he did not secretly admit the possibility and even the probability of that existence. We do not fight with shadows, nor would our denial do any service unless they were something to deny. I might for instance say—There is no such man as John Smith, but the very fact that I say so presupposes that I had an impression of a John Smith—and a reason for denying his existence. A remarkable French author has said: “The multitude never conspires except against real forces; it has not the power of distinguishing that which is true, but it possesses the instinct of that which is strong.” * The undefined fear of misfortune is often the precursor of it and by the agency of evil Spirits is sometimes induced in order to produce it.

“The instinct of that which is strong,” the secret of the opposition which exists towards Spiritualism—the fear that it may be true—that it may upset the vested rights of a class to our consciences, and cause the official churches to come into disrepute, has raised up a similar resistance to that which some eighteen hundred years ago existed in reference to the christianity which our ministers of religion profess now to teach. But to combat that powerful phalanx the simple *agis* of Truth has but to be presented, and by seeking the Good and abstaining from the Evil, that invincible shield will be attained.

Now the test of truth has been well defined by that excellent man and true friend to humanity, the venerable and kind-hearted Robert Owen to lie in the

* Doctrine and Ritual of High Magic by Eliphas Levi (Alphonse Louis Constant) Vol i p. 8.

consistency of any given assertion with all other known facts. I must confess that hitherto in my researches into Spiritualism I have met (except when I came to the explanations afforded through the Mirror) nothing which I could call consistent with the result of the same phenomena in other persons. I mean that while in most instances I found any individual medium consistent for the most part with himself, I found at the same time that the results were in almost all cases inconsistent with all other results through other media.

Mr. Paschal Randolph, for instance, whom I had the pleasure to meet and whose trance addresses as recorded by your correspondent J. D., were communicated to me, was consistent enough with himself. The phenomena were genuine—there was no attempt at deception—the least candid stranger would confess that—in his normal condition it was sufficiently clear that never could such improvisation have emanated from his mind, yet place those wonderful and wild lectures upon universal philosophy side by side with the results of another mediumship and you find them as different as light from dark, or as red from blue.

Swedenborg, whose scientific researches are now being tardily acknowledged, whose wondrous inductions upon anatomy are being unwillingly recognized by the official representatives of physiological science—Swedenborg passed the boundary of the world of matter and by force of will and purity of life was enabled to project his intellect into the world of spirit—but here again if you collate his statements and reports of the spiritual condition with those of others you get to the same barren plain of doubt.

Andrew Jackson Davis again, is the exponent of a new heaven and a new earth. Judge Edmonds tells you one thing, and Mrs Crosland another. In America the spirits deny Christ's divinity, in France they affirm the Immaculate Conception and the doctrine of the real presence. Mr. Owen recognizes at Sevenoaks the spirit of his friend the Duke of Kent—and at Hampstead Mr Wilkinson has affecting and convincing interviews with his dead child. And yet all the statements are irreconcilable. There is not one book in which we do not find inconsistencies fatal to the truth of the doctrines set forth.

Are we to conclude from this however, as some have done, that Spiritualism is a delusion, a phantom of the imagination, no reality, but a cold impossible condition? GOD forbid! for my part I have clearly defined before me that there is a light and a dark side of Spiritualism as there is a white or Theurgic magic and a Black or Goetic magic. The dark side however is to be separated into two divisions, one caused by our own imperfect knowledge and careless preparation for entering upon these high studies, the other by the real action of malevolent intelligences themselves. Let us examine these two divisions and see if there be any healing panacea for these ills.

I believe no one would for a moment say that it is not quite true that our knowledge of spiritual laws is far from perfect—that we have got to re-read our spiritual books, to form new ideas respecting life and death, and to patiently collate the evidence which our varied spirit experience lays before us. And one of the first questions which arises is—Are all the phenomena really objective, do they exist beyond and outside of ourselves? The ignorant section who oppose

us answers "No—GOD gives you no means of communion with intelligences out of the flesh and even if———"and with that fatal "if" they stop. Another class says—"Well I admit your sincerity, and I admit what I have witnessed, but you see science is so illimitable that———"the rest of the story we know of old. A third party says,—“Yes but then it's tempting GOD, and must be evil!" as if GOD would permit evil in his own nature. There is yet a fourth view to be taken, which is the most specious and most philosophical, and this I will endeavour to set forth, but I expressly write it down as not more than a specious view, not a verity in any sense.

This view regards the Universe as infinite and every intellect as the centre of that universe for the practical purposes of life or existence. Relatively every star therefore, every individual residing on any earth is to be looked upon as a centre. His ideas formed for him by the life he has had to undergo, become the sum total of his views upon the surrounding objects of vision or subjects of thought. It might then be well said that he was in fact the creator of his own universe—that it was strictly true in its relation to him although false when measured by any one else's standard. But pray you look at this closer and you will see that this is practical atheism. For if man does indeed create his own universe—two men could never see the same phenomenon in nature—the sun would not rise for two men at the same time—its beams would not help to ripen the same harvest—there could then be nothing absolute, but all relative. If each Man is a Creator what need of a universal mind?

This would, were it true, explain away the inconsistencies of mediumship—but would it not destroy mediumship altogether in effect? Some persons consider mediumship universal—for my part I do not. It may be possible at some future time, and that thought brings me to a second cause of incoherency in results. Purity of thought, and as far as possible of life, will promote coherent and consistent results, because purity promotes—by the effect it has in freeing the mind from anxiety, and therefore restoring magnetic equilibrium,—persistency in a certain direction—ultimately to be rewarded by certain truths. A friend,—by whom my spiritual theories came into existence—who fortunately for me led me from the darkness into the light—lent me various volumes of his spiritual records and I confess that I must admire the steady persistency which led him to write down every trivial unimportant detail, and work on through much puerile and incoherent stuff to true, great, and beautiful principles, which, when known, rendered the other natural, interesting, and instructive. It was then quite plain that the evil spirits are continually strong to gain an ascendancy over us, that without the exercise of fortitude, the assistance of faith and an humble devotion to a fixed purpose no result can be come to in Spirit Intercourse fit to bear the test of time, and to be reconsidered without a painful feeling when years have passed away.

Again entreating from those who may differ from me a charitable hearing, I must distinctly say, that for the present, I cannot and do not see that writing, rapping, and trance mediumship, are to be generally depended upon; and I will close this chapter with an extract from my spiritual Diary upon the subject of writing mediumship—

"It is possession. There is force used—force is low and degrading and belonging to earth—force that makes man write is not used from without. If his hand were moved from without the means would be visible, for material can only touch material—can only make itself felt:—but when the Spirit enters the life of man and impels him to motion it possesses him. And if it possesses the hand, how can it get to the hand without possessing the body likewise, and any means that has influence over man except through his reason, any power that guides him except through his intelligence—he should shun, turn from, and avoid, as he would from an enemy of his everlasting peace, as from one who would make him the instrument of his own destruction."— [THE SPIRIT WORLD, VOL. i. p. 43.]

The discursiveness of this article I wish it to be understood is no fault or intention of mine—feeling as I do continually the magnetic action of my Guardian spirit upon myself, I am often led to ruminate in a totally different field of thought to that which I proposed to myself.

LONDON MARCH, 15. 1858.

KENNETH R. H. MACKENZIE.

A PUNY ARGUMENT, OR, THE LAST SHIF'T.

During the multiplicity of enquiries, it has frequently occurred that our opponents have, after exhausting every other excuse, exclaimed in a tone of triumph;—“Granted, that the strange occurrences you name do really take place and that they are of Spirit origin; What are their uses, and how will mankind be benefitted by them?”

Ans. 1st There is nothing true but that which is useful. 2nd There influence must be, first, individually and then collectively. As an instance of their influence individually, we cite the following as a sample out of thousands of similar cases:—

“DEAR SIR,—You will be surprised at my long-continued silence which has been caused by various circumstances. Still I thank you for the confidence you have had in me by continuing the numbers. They have been the source of continued pleasure to me, increasing greatly with every new number. I have been enabled to receive solid comfort and transporting peace from them under my trying circumstances,—for I am now out of employment, and were it not for the permission, as it were, to enter into the world of causes through the *Telegraph*, and my acquaintance with the beautiful and uniform doctrines of Swedenborg, I should have nothing but a fearful looking into the future with regard to the temporal wants of my family.

Oh, Sir, I find the most abundant cause for thankfulness to our Father in Heaven for the Bible, the *Telegraph*, and Swedenborg; and I trust that, be the time sooner or later, the song I have learnt to sing here, will continue with transcendent vigour and purity in His Kingdom of Love, and that I shall be enabled by the mediumship of Spiritualism to be of that use to those I leave behind that shall in some measure answer the end for which we all are created.”

THE DUDLEY TEETOTAL CIRCLE.

On Sunday, March 14th, it was impressed upon the mind of the Dudley writing medium, to call upon a few of the committee of the Temperance Society to form a circle: he being a teetotaler did so, and the following communication was received from the spirit of Cicero, the Roman orator.

“My dear earthly friends; it is with pleasure I meet you this evening. It is for want of meetings like this that the vast majority of the labouring poor are deprived of those blessings and advantages which are the lot of all men to enjoy.

Well, dear friends, I would suggest the propriety of, in all things, keeping your mind, body, and spirit as virtuous as possible. Aim at benevolence and charity with all men:—not only be patterns of abstinence, but let, in all things, your goodness, which is innate, be known unto all men! Seek this:—this will find you peace of mind when all else shall fail.

I feel great happiness in being able to converse with my brethren in the flesh.

Would that Spiritualism was acknowledged and accepted by men of all nations. Till this is the case, tyranny, anarchy, and oppression will rule rampant through the land, and mankind will suffer the natural consequences of this besetting ignorance.

When man, made with extensive endowments, shall put himself in the way of social progress—then shall he be pure and happy.”

ENQUIRER.

OBITUARY.

DEAR SIR,—Mrs Jones left us last night, (Tuesday the 13th. April, 1858) at half past Eleven o'clock.

Perhaps it is in place to state, that one Sabbath day some 9 months ago the relatives and medical attendant of Mrs Jones thought she was dying: on that day it was foretold under Spirit influence, that she would recover, but that the change would take place in April, 1858.

About the middle of March last it was foretold, that on 7th of April, 1858 she would be taken for death — it was so; — and again, the actual day of her change was foretold five days before its occurrence.

I am, Yours truly,

Peckham, 14th April, 1858.

J. JONES.